

A Case Study of Students' Barriers in Passive Voice Sentences

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ABSTRACT

This study was to find out the errors experienced by students in composing passive voice sentences. It also explained the factors that caused students' barriers in constructing passive voice sentences. This study focused on students' errors and barriers in constructing passive voice sentences in the form of Simple Present Tense, Simple Past Tense, and Present Future Perfect Tense. The research approach used was a qualitative method through a case study. The subject of this research was 12 students in class XII of SMKS Yaspenmas Sei Lapan. Data collection techniques were tests and interviews. The findings of this study were the types of student errors on *omission* 62.4%, *misinformation* 10.6%, *misordering* 27%. As well as the location of the error in the passive voice sentence in the form of Simple Present Tense in the use of *to be* 75%, *past participle* 100%, then the use of *to be* in the Simple Past Tense 95, 83% and *past participle* 64.6%, then the use of *have* in Present Future Perfect Tense 36.1%, *been* 100%, and *past participle* 33.3%. These errors were due to internal factors and external factors. The internal factors were students' lack of interest in learning English as well as lack of vocabulary mastery and lack of understanding of grammar. The external factors were lack of parental attention, lack of supporting media in the learning process, inadequate school infrastructures, and the road to school was difficult to pass.

Keywords: *Students' Barriers; Passive Voice; Sentences.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important element in carrying out a life that ensures prosperity in the future. In the Constitution Article 31 Paragraph 1 reads "Every citizen has the right to education" (UUD 1945). Education makes humans have extensive knowledge, builds character, advances the economy, and helps advance the nation. Education, in general, means developing self-potential in each individual to carry on his life to produce educated humans who are helpful for the nation and state. Talking about education, of course, cannot be separated from the language, which is considered significant in human life. Omid Pourkalhor and Nastaran Esfandiari (2017) explain that "Communication is a means to develop and pass on culture and communicate in culture". Language is part of the culture used to communicate with people in everyday life and at school to convey information and socialize. One of the languages widely used by humans in English, which is also called a foreign language. We often find many products on the packaging that use English, such as food, medicine, drinks, and others.

This happens because English is an international language used by people worldwide. However, most Indonesian people have difficulty and understanding communicating verbally or in writing using English. This language is the first foreign language taught in educational institutions, which are compulsory subjects for elementary school, junior high school, and senior high schools.

To master English, students must have four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Apart from these four skills, there is an essential ability that we must have in writing, namely grammar. Grammar is a place where sentences or phrases are formed from the knowledge and linguistic rules that are finally achieved. A lack of grammar knowledge will affect communication results (Shashirekha, 2014).

Learning the passive voice in a country where English is written as the primary language can be quite a challenge. Many people learn English by listening or watching and in everyday conversation; many sentences are in the active form so that the passive voice is used less frequently (Agustini, 2017). Passive sentences must have been studied starting from middle school and high school, so passive sentences we often hear and learn, so that students are expected to understand and make passive voice sentences correctly. Passive sentences are very useful informal writing because the passive voice is often used to write scientific papers and passive sentences are important to make it easier for students to write (Ratnasari, 2011). Understanding passive voice in English is a big challenge for teachers and students. Mistakes and errors in the use of passive voice are indicators of students' failure to understand this topic (Kurnianto, 2020). Based on the experience of researchers and observations of students at the Yaspenmas Sei Lapan Private Vocational School, they still experience difficulties in using and making passive sentences according to the correct grammar. Therefore, as a teacher, it is very important to know students' barriers when learning something so that we can find out what further efforts we can make so that what we get they can receive well.

Based on Fahriany's previous research, with his research, "Analysis of Students' Errors in Changing Active Sentences into Passive Voices", it was found that class XI IPA SMAN 1 Kabandungan had errors in answering passive voice and simple past tense questions, namely 83.3% of information on verb changes using the passive voice formula, 56% in simple past tense and forming 21.7% (Suhartini, 2011). The similarity of this research lies in finding out students' mistakes in passive sentences. Still, the focus is different where this research focuses on passive voice sentences in 3 tenses, namely simple present tense, simple past tense, future perfect tense, and the object of research in class XII. Meanwhile, the research is different in the form of location and data found.

Students who do not understand grammar rules really feel confused because the verb in the sentence under different conditions in the present, past, and future will also be different in form. Not only that, they will also be confused by the existence of passive sentences. From this point of view, we can understand that grammar is about making sentences with the correct pattern and having to look at what conditions the verb in the sentence occurs. Passive sentences in Indonesian first are as difficult as passive sentences in English because the teacher, when teaching, must start with the active sentence first.

Sentences in English are influenced by their tenses, while sentences in Indonesian do not recognize tenses (Suprato, 2012).

When we want to make passive sentences, we need to pay attention to the tenses in active sentences first to make passive sentences correctly.

Here are several locations where students make errors in answering passive voice questions, namely verb changes and to be. Both are important elements in constructing passive sentences (Suhartini, 2011).

(1). To be, English grammar has several forms, namely, *am*, *is*, and *are* for the present tense, *was* and *were* for the past tense, then *been* for the past participle but before starting with an auxiliary in the form of *have*, *has*, or *had*. To be as a conjunction between the object and the subject. As an example: *The lessons was explained by the teacher yesterday*. The error found in passive sentences in the form of simple past tense is in to be *was*, because the correct one should be: *The lessons were explained by the teacher yesterday*, where the word lessons are in the plural so was changed to were.

(2). Verbs, in making sentences, accuracy is needed in the verb, because the verb determines when the event occurs, whether in the present, past, or future. English requires verbal conjugation to modify the tense in a sentence. The verbal conjugation used in the passive voice is the past participle. Examples of errors in arranging passive sentences: *The house was built in 1972* and *The house was build in 1972*. The error found in the passive sentence in the form of the simple past tense above is in the sentence part (b) *build* which is an "irregular verb" so that the past participle form of *build* is *built*. In addition to irregular verbs, English also has regular verbs (verbs that are usually followed by -d or -ed). So we have to understand whether the verb is an irregular verb or a regular verb (Suhartini, 2011).

Next, errors are disturbances in the production process of the mother tongue and target language that arise not due to lack of competence (Herlinawati, 2011). In this study, the author uses the Ellis theory in Rini Supit's research (2016). There are several types of errors which are as follows:

(1). Omission, is an error in omission of words or grammatical learners in writing to fulfill excellent and correct grammatical requirements. Example: *Teacher not here*. The sentence above is wrong because there is an "is" omission in the sentence to become ungrammatical. Correct sentence: *Teacher is not here*.

(2). Misinformation is an error in formatting the source language into the target language. Example: *A man and a little boy was watching him*. This sentence is wrong because "was" is used when describing a singular subject and "were" is used when the subject is plural (plural). Correct sentence: *A man and a little boy were watching him*.

(3). Misordering, is a misplacement of words in the right order. Example: *There they had a big surprise*. This sentence is wrong because a misplacement makes this sentence ungrammatical. Correct sentence: *They had a big surprise there* (Supit, 2016). The errors above cause students to be hampered in compiling passive sentences. Passive voice is a sentence whose subject receives an action; usually, the passive voice is always followed by an active voice, whereas the active voice is a sentence whose subject takes actions (Tiwari, 2017).

Passive voice emphasizes the thing done rather than the culprit, or when the culprit is unknown (Haryani & Hartanto, 2019). Hence, a sentence has a subject, verb, and object is called passive voice. When the active sentence's subject is shifted to the passive voice, the object of the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence, followed by the correct grammar formula for the time of the event. The following are some types of passive sentences in English:

- (1). Passive sentences whose perpetrators (actors, agents) are unknown. Example: Active: *Someone broke one of our windows.* Passive: *One of our windows was broken.*
- (2). Passive sentences whose perpetrators are unclear or unimportant. Example: Active: *People of all over the world speak English.* Passive: *English is spoken all over the world.*
- (3). Passive sentences where the perpetrator is known or stressed. For example: Active: *The cat is eating the fish.* Passive: *The fish is being eaten by the cat.*

In student learning, it has several barriers. Barriers are all circumstances that make it difficult for a person to achieve the goals to be achieved (Astuti, 2018). Barriers also mean a person's inability to communicate using a foreign language due to vocabulary, dialect, accent, physical ability, intelligence, cultural background, and interests (Harina, 2020). Learning barriers can be expressed as a learning difficulty; Learning barriers can be stated as learning difficulties, there are many factors that cause obstacles, both external and internal factors (Fernandes et al., 2019). From the above understanding, the researcher can conclude that an obstacle is a condition that prevents a person from doing something that causes difficulties. Many problems often occur in the learning process, especially for students. This can be caused by school factors, teaching staff, environment, and students. Several types of barriers will be described below:

- (1). Physical barriers are problems caused by physical disabilities, such as students experiencing problems in learning.
- (2). Communication barriers, are obstacles that occur when someone cannot capture information, such as students not understanding the teacher's explanation in the learning process.
- (3). Systemic barriers are processes of learning practices and policies that differ from students' conditions so that students experience discrimination in understanding.
- (4). Attitude barriers are beliefs or perceptions that do not match abilities and lack of knowledge (Astuti, 2018).

Factors of learning barriers are obstacles that occur because of obstacles in the learning process (Fitryani, n.d.). Barrier factors are divided into two: First, internal factors are factors that come from within the individual. Several obstacles arise from within students, as follows: (1). Physical factors are divided into two; the first health is the body's condition. Health is very influential on the learning process. If our health decreases, it will interfere with the learning process to achieve reasonable goals. Decreased health can result in dizziness, fatigue, drowsiness, lack of enthusiasm, lack of blood or disorders, and abnormalities in the function of the senses and body. The second is that body defects are imperfect sensory organs or body parts. Disabilities can be blind, deaf, broken bones, paralyzed, and unsteady hands. These conditions can affect the learning process. If this happens, he should study in special education or try to use assistive devices to reduce the impact of his disability.

(2). Psychological factors, several factors are classified as psychological factors, namely: intelligence, attention, interest, talent, motivation, maturity, and readiness.

Meanwhile, several factors are classified as external factors: (1). Factors coming from parents. This factor is significant in learning outcomes because parents are the first humans we meet in the world and become teachers for children (Nukuhaly, 2019). (2). Factors coming from school. Students certainly learn in the school environment and always meet with fellow students, teachers, and employees. Factors originating from schools can be caused by teachers, teaching materials, subjects, school infrastructure, and methods used in the learning process (Astuti, 2018). (3). Factors coming from the community. Humans indeed cannot be separated from society in everyday life and school. Society is very influential in good and bad life (Nursyaidah, 2014).

METHOD

This study employs qualitative method of research. Qualitative research is based on findings that cannot be obtained through statistical or quantitative but narrative (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019). The data was collected and evaluated without any experimental manipulation, and the researcher concluded that the data analysis was valid. This strategy aimed to collect thorough information about students' errors and explains the factors that cause students' barriers in constructing passive voice sentences. This research was conducted in class XII of SMKS Yaspenmas Sei Lapan that contained of 12 students. Researchers used two types of tools to collect data in this study: tests and interviews. The researchers gave 15 questions for the passive voice sentence test in this study. Then in this study the researchers used targeted interviews. The number of interview respondents in this study was five people. This interview collected supporting information about the factors that cause students' obstacles in compiling passive sentences in class XII students of SMKS Yaspenmas Sei Lapan. The researchers used the following procedure to analyze the data: the students' test results and interviews were collected first by the researchers. Second, the researchers used error theory in compiling passive sentences to test data from the findings of student test results. Third, based on interviews, the researcher details the students' barriers in collecting passive sentences. Finally, the researchers drew conclusions based on test and interview data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

On July 22, 2021, students took the test. Participants were not allowed to use Google during the exercise. Then, the researchers wanted to first investigate the participants' errors by examining their practice. This study revealed that students had several problems in composing passive voice sentences. Based on the study results, students experienced errors in passive voice sentences in the form of Simple Present Tense 93.3%.

Furthermore, students' errors in passive voice sentences in the form of Simple Past Tense are 96.7%. Then the error in the passive voice sentence in the Present Future Perfect Tense is 88.3%. From the presentation of the percentage of students' errors in compiling

passive voice sentences in 3 tenses, below will be presented the location of the error and the type of student error:

Table 1. The results of passive voice sentences in tenses form

Simple Present Tense		Simple Past Tense		Future Perfect Tense		
To be	Past Participle	To be	Past Participle	Have	Been	Past Participle
75%	100%	95,83%	64,6%	36,1%	100%	33,3%

The students' errors that appear in the test on passive voice sentences in the form of Simple Present Tense and Past Tense are in the use of to be and past participle. While the Future Perfect Tense is the use of have, been, and past participle.

Table 2. The results of types of errors

Omission	Misinformation	Misordering
62,4%	10,6%	27%

Students who experience these errors are divided into several types, the first is omission with a percentage of 62.4%. This error occurs in to be, by, and been, then the sentences they write are also incomplete. Next up on Misinformation 10, 6%. This error is in the verb where the passive sentence should use the past participle, but the student does not change the verb. And the last one is misordering 27%. On average, students make errors, namely, they rewrite the questions without understanding the correct sentence pattern so that the subject and object of the passive sentence are wrong. So of the three types of errors experienced by students, they made the most significant errors in omission, which was caused because students did not understand the correct grammar in passive voice sentences according to the three tenses in this study.

Then the researchers gleaned information from the interview results on the 5 participants' through 8 interview questions with the same questions, researchers got answers about the factors that cause students' barriers in compiling passive voice sentences. The first internal factor experienced by the students of the SMK Yaspemas Sei Lepad was the psychological factors: (1). The lack of students' interest in learning English can be seen in question number 1 (Do you like English lessons). Among five students, only one person likes English lessons, then 1 student does not really like English lessons, and the other 3 students do not like English lessons. So the point is that the average student experiences obstacles in compiling passive voice sentences because they do not like English lessons because the students are difficult to learn and are bored with learning English lessons. (2). Does not understand grammar, especially in tenses and passive voice sentence patterns. In interview questions number 3 (Do you understand the use of tenses?), 5 (Do you understand the formula of passive voice sentences?), and 7 (Which part of passive voice sentences do you find difficult?) on understanding tenses from 5 students only 2 students who understand a little about tenses, namely simple present tense and simple past tense and the other three students

do not understand tenses at all. Then in number 5, only one student understands passive voice sentence patterns. Question number 7 all find the passive voice difficult, especially in using to be and past participle. Students also do not understand the object of the active sentence, which should turn into the subject of the passive sentence.(3)—lack of vocabulary mastery. The Yaspenmas Sei Lapan Private Vocational School students, especially in class XII, have limitations in mastering vocabulary where the maximum vocabulary they can master is only 100 words. This is the obstacle for students in compiling passive voice sentences so that they do not understand the meaning of the sentence given by the researcher.

The second was external factors; several external factors hinder students in compiling passive voice sentences: (1)—lack of parental attention. In learning, of course, students also need help from parents outside of school hours, mainly because parents become teachers for students outside school. Parents are tasked with motivating and assisting children in learning. However, what was experienced by the five resource people was that only one student studied at home and did not get help from parents. (2). The teacher does not provide supporting media in the teaching and learning process. (3). Lack of school infrastructure. (4). The condition of the road to school is difficult to pass. When it rains at night, the road to school is damaged with muddy soil, making it difficult for students to come to school in the morning. When studying passive voice material, there are some students who cannot come to school and study the material so that they do not understand sentence patterns in passive voice.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that what students barriers in writing passive voice sentences based on internal factors is that students make some grammar mistakes caused because students do not understand grammar correctly, which are analyzed based on tests, students make mistakes in the use of to be is in the form of the Simple Present Tense with a percentage of 75% and the past participle 100%, then in the Simple Past Tense the percentage of errors in the use of to be is 95, 83% and the past participle 64,6%. Furthermore, in passive sentences in the form of Present Future Perfect Tense they make mistakes in having with a percentage of 36.1%, the use of been 100%, and the past participle 33.3%. Then students who experience these errors are divided into several types, and the first is omission with a percentage of 62.4%. This error occurs in to be, by and been, then the sentences they write are also incomplete. Next up on misinformation 10, 6%. This error is in the verb where the passive sentence should use the past participle, but the student does not change the verb. The last one is misordering 27%. On average, students make errors; namely, they rewrite the questions without understanding the correct sentence pattern so that the subject and object of the passive sentence are wrong. Lack of student interest in learning English and lack of vocabulary mastery are also internal factors that hinder students in passive voice.

Finally, external factors such as a lack of parental attention, the absence of supporting media in the learning process, insufficient school infrastructure, and a difficult-to-pass

road to school were all found to be obstacles for students in constructing passive voice sentences correctly and adequately.

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